

Yuh J. Hwang, "Aestheticizing the City Through Storytelling and Walking: Dublin's 1916 Rebellion Walking Tour," *Lateral* 8.1 (2019).

<https://doi.org/10.25158/L8.1.6>

This content is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. Copyright is retained by authors.

Issue 8.1 (Spring 2019)

Aestheticizing the City Through Storytelling and Walking: Dublin's 1916 Rebellion Walking Tour

YJ Hwang

ABSTRACT The main concern of this article is situated in the theatrical experience of the 1916 rebellion walking tour as a broader mode of aestheticizing performance, focusing on the ways it traces the process of the tour to ask what the appeal is for international tourists in experiencing often tragic historical events through the use of performative strategies, namely, acts of walking and storytelling. By employing Walter Benjamin's notion of storytelling and Michel de Certeau's approach to the walking, this article intends to explore how the 1916 walking tour as a cultural practice rearranges and recreates the Dublin landscape, and how these new meanings are constituted aesthetically beyond their entertainment value. Furthermore, by placing this tour as performative genre, this article investigates how this historic event is embodied by the guide, perceived and transformed by tour groups, thereby creating tourists' kinesthetic empathy during the tour, by way of the guide's storytelling with their walking. In doing so, this article will offer a broader context of staging this historical memory that commemorates past events by way of physical engagement with this tour.

The 1916 Rising and Irish Tourism

The 1916 Easter Rising stands as the founding event of the Republic of Ireland and is regarded as "one of the most talismanic moments" in modern Irish history.¹ Only fifteen hundred rebels who occupied a number of key buildings in Dublin engaged in the rising, while a group of Irish nationalists at the General Post Office (GPO) proclaimed Ireland as independent of Great Britain's rule. Yet they received little support from the Irish people at the outset. Within a week they were crushed by the British, and fifteen leaders were executed shortly after they were arrested. After that, public opinion shifted and the executed leaders became martyrs because of their bloody sacrifice for the sake of the nation.²

This iconic event in Irish history has transformed and re-emerged in the form of Irish tourism.³ Susan Bennett argues that "a well-established tourism industry in Ireland has managed to promote a concept of fantasy to its visitors that over-determines the relationship of the tourist to the place."⁴ According to Tim Edensor and Julian Holloway, "the selling of Ireland on the global tourist market by the Irish Tourist Board (Fáilte Ireland) is often marketed around five distinct themes: romantic nature, agricultural work, religious heritage, Celtic history and tradition, literature and folklore."⁵ The 1916 Easter Rising comes into being as a cultural practice associated with mythic and legendary stories and the religious imagery of that Easter, thus appealing to a broader public within a global context. This is particularly true when one thinks of the mythic and sublime elements of the Easter Rising in Irish tourism, linked to the bloody sacrifice of the executed leaders, because the event may be understood as one of the founding myths of the Irish Republic. This explains why the Easter Rising could be viewed as "part mystery play, part melodrama, part avant-garde provocation."⁶ This aspect of the event is highlighted by Dublin's 1916 Rebellion Walking Tour, in particular.

This tour was created in 1996 by Lorcan Collins, an Irish historian and the author of two books, *A Guide to Dublin in 1916* and *James Connolly*. The two-hour tour takes place at 11:30 a.m. on a daily basis from March 1 until October 31 and meets at a Dublin pub. It is regarded as one of the best tours by tourists because it proceeds in a dynamic and entertaining manner, regardless of the tragic features of this historic event.⁷ When I joined the tour, I wanted to witness historic sites in person; I was somewhere between a tourist and a Dublin resident. As a non-Irish citizen who was researching early twentieth century Anglo-Irish drama at that time, I did not consider the city a tourist attraction nor a home.

What makes this tour interesting is the way in which it does not merely fall into the shaping of “a national landscape ideology” in relation to the founding myth of the Irish nation.⁸ The Easter Rising is critiqued as simplifying the “contradictory” nature of the event as an iconic moment in Irish nationalism, due to the leaders’ lack of preparation for the rebellion in the short term and the misconception of “the actual date of the Irish Independence.”⁹ But this walking tour demonstrates that the tourist’s experience could be aesthetical, rather than political, because of the way the tour is constituted.

With this in mind, this article is mostly based on my experience on the tour. Rather than generalizing the functional aspects of this walking tour as merely a reflection of the Easter Rising, the main concern of this article is situated in the theatrical experience of this tour as a broader mode of aestheticizing performance. It traces the process of the tour to ask what the appeal is for international tourists in experiencing often tragic historical events through the use of performative strategies, namely, acts of walking and storytelling. Judith Adler defines “travel as performed art” and this perspective might help to elaborate on a relationship between tourism and performance.¹⁰

What most characterizes this tour as performance is the ephemeral nature of this event as well as the way in which the tour unfolds for tourists. Dublin, where the tour takes place, is analogous to a “haunted stage,” which Marvin Carlson defines by stating “there clearly seems to be something in the nature of dramatic presentation that makes it a particularly attractive repository for storage and mechanism for the continued recirculation of cultural memory.”¹¹ This allows us to understand how Dublin functions as the haunted stage on which the tourist experiences a nationalist narrative of the Easter Rising, a narrative linked to Collins’ perspective on the martyrs’ sacrifices, death, loss, and the founding of the Irish nation. Given that the tour could have been slightly different each day, this tour also reveals the performance’s ephemerality and unrepeatability.

If “a distinct style of travel implies collectively sustained and successfully transmitted conventions of performance,” we need to consider that the uniqueness of this tour lies in the act of walking, as its name suggests.¹² Michel de Certeau describes “walking as a space of enunciation.”¹³ Walking is a performative link between the guide and the tourists or between the tourists and the city. And the act of walking is framed by the interplay between the storyteller’s guidance and the acts of listening and seeing experienced by the tourists. Considering that the overarching aim of the tour is “to relax and to let go,” acts of storytelling and walking are aesthetical mediums for embodying the 1916 Rebellion Tour from the perspective of performance studies.¹⁴ By employing Walter Benjamin’s notion of storytelling and Michel de Certeau’s approach to the walking, this article intends to explore how the 1916 walking tour as a cultural practice rearranges and recreates the Dublin landscape, and how these new meanings are constituted aesthetically beyond their entertainment value.

Collins states that the purpose of the tour is to enable the broader public to remember that “the Easter Rising is a seminal event in Irish history.”¹⁵ This article presents an

intriguing case study to consider the way in which the legacy of the Easter Rising is remembered in the contemporary context. By categorizing the tour as a performative genre and challenging the idea that “tourism concerns the empty, postmodern consumption of otherness, is a passive, spectacle-oriented, disembodied and superficial pursuit,”¹⁶ this article investigates how this historic event is embodied by the guide, and perceived and transformed by tour groups, and how this tour evokes tourists’ kinesthetic empathy through the guide’s storytelling and their walking. This article will thus offer a broader context for staging historical memory that commemorates past events on the basis of bodily engagement with this tour.

The 1916 Rebellion Walking Tour as Performative Genre

The 1916 Rebellion walking Tour begins at 11:30 a.m. in the International Bar on Wicklow Street in Dublin. When I attended it, people from all over the world were present. To be specific, on that day there were around twenty people who came from the United States, Switzerland, India, Denmark and many other countries.¹⁷ People of various ages, from their twenties to their seventies, participated in the tour. Before commencing the tour, Collins delivers an introductory talk lasting some twenty minutes in the basement of the pub, distributing handouts to the tourists. The handout contains photographs of the historical figures in relation to the Easter Rising and the proclamation entitled “the provisional government of the Irish republic to the people of Ireland” as well as the names and brief descriptions of Irish organizations such as the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Gaelic Athletic Association. The handout is red, representing the rebels’ bloody sacrifice; the color red is also found throughout the tour’s website. Framing the information for the tour with red colors reveals that the tone of the 1916 revolution tour is based on such a sublime attitude toward the actual event. However, the overall atmosphere of the tour is quite entertaining and staggering in terms of the way in which the content of the historical events is delivered to the tourists.

Collins offers a snapshot of Irish history from the Great Famine to the social and political contexts of the revolutionary period leading up to the Easter Rising. The historical overview serves to highlight the necessity of an Ireland independent from British rule, and to frame the context of the tour for the international group of tourists, many of whom have little to no knowledge of Irish history. This overview section of the tour could be likened to a pre-production in which the tour guide sets the stage for the rest of the tour. On the tours I attended, Collins told us, “Don’t worry about all the names. You don’t have to learn the names off. *Just knowing the story is more important than anything else.*”¹⁸ This statement is important in determining a major characteristic of the walking tour as performative genre, as the tour guide is positioned as a storyteller. Danish journalist Peter Kyhl Olesen retells his experience of Collins’s passion for the subject matter after taking the walking tour:

[Lorcan Collins] *is a divine story-teller* and manages through his catching enthusiasm and huge knowledge about the topic *to dramatize the more factual parts of history* both before, during and after the Easter Rising, and he is capable of keeping the attention of the big group of tourists who are present day to day.¹⁹

This quotation reveals that Collins performs their role as a storyteller and is able “to dramatise” his story about the Easter Rising—something he has done for over two decades on an almost daily basis. Indeed, storytelling as a dramatic form is an effective way of appealing to tourists during the walking tour. Walter Benjamin observes how storytelling reveals its nature:

The more natural the process by which the storyteller forges psychological shading, the greater becomes the story's claim to a place in the memory of the listener, the more completely is it integrated into his own experience, the greater will be his inclination to repeat it to someone else someday, sooner or later. This process of assimilation, which takes place in depth, requires a state of relaxation which is becoming rarer and rarer.²⁰

What is noticeable here is that Benjamin links the nature of story to "a state of relaxation." According to him, this state of relaxation enables the storyteller to bring about a "process of assimilation" with the listener. Indeed, such an aspect of storytelling resembles a travel experience in which tourists enter "a state of relaxation" by means of the slow pace of their steps throughout the sections of storytelling in this walking tour. Before starting the tour, Collins's introduction of Irish historical overview leading up to the Easter Rising opens up the tourists to the process of assimilation. He places less weight on biography and dates than on emotional value before and during the tour, thereby diminishing the burden of knowing a particular history in detail, which most tourists do not know about. For example, when he says that "for some reason, the only way to get British attention was to shoot someone or blow something up," the tone of his statement is not restricted to delivering a sense of justification for the Rising, but to conveying an urgent sense of the desperation of the rebels in their dealings with their colonizers.²¹

In particular, "the process of assimilation" takes place by means of the interplay between the tourists and the guide. As Collins emphasizes, "the best way for you to get the most out of the tour is to interact, ask questions and give your own opinion." Accordingly, this gives us a clue to understanding this tour as performance in terms of its form and characteristic in the knowledge that "performances exist only as actions, interactions, and relationships."²² Central to the mutual and interactive relationship between the guide and tourists in this walking tour, tourists could be understood as spectators from the perspective of the performance.²³

In addition to the fact that the interactive relationship between the guide and tourists encourages the latter to act as spectator-performers, this tour contains another inherent quality of performance, particularly when we notice that this tour runs on a daily basis. It would seem that running the tour on a daily basis is a ritual ceremony for Collins, and one that he has dedicated his life to in memory of the historic event. As Richard Schechner argues, "performance—of art, rituals, or ordinary life—are 'restored behaviours' . . . performed actions that people train for and rehearse."²⁴ The repetitive ritual of this tour, revealing a performative quality, shows how Collins incorporates the historic event into the tour and himself as well, and maintains a sense of passion for the history he preserves.

What is more, Collins's storytelling plays a pivotal role in reinforcing his position as an artisan. This idea is more plausible when one considers storytelling as "the oldest form of craftsmanship" and "the art of repeating stories" of interest.²⁵ Throughout Collins's storytelling, the gaps between guide and tourists and between tourists and locals are reduced or collapsed, thereby enabling people of all ages to experience the walking tour vividly.

More importantly, what characterizes this tour as performance are two strategies, namely acts of storytelling and walking. Although this tour is not a conventional stage for theatre productions, the two fundamental strategies used by this tour invite the tourists to engage with them kinesthetically in relation to their interactions with the sites and the actual event of the Easter Rising. If we agree that kinesthetic empathy is defined "as a movement across and between bodies, which, in an artistic situation, can have affective impact with potential to change modes of perception and ways of knowing," then the

tourist's kinesthetic empathy during this tour is embodied in terms of responses to movement and the content of the actual historic event as well as encountering a local landscape while he or she travels on foot through the Dublin streets during the tour.²⁶ To put it another way, by delivering a synopsis of the historical background behind events leading up to the Easter Rising, this tour enables tourists to transform "layers of meaning, deep significance, unfamiliar symbolic codes, and portentous crowds" into the kinesthetic empathy that is evoked by Collins's storytelling as well as the tourist's walking.²⁷

According to Collins, his aims for running the tour on a regular basis are "to keep the story alive and tell it the way it happened."²⁸ Like a performer in the theatre staging the Easter Rising, Collins revives the stories of the events by way of his storytelling embodied by gestures, movements, and speech. Indeed, the contents of the story which Collins delivered constituted fragments of songs, poems, films, and speeches that are deeply rooted in the Easter Rising. He passionately recited "All changed, changed utterly. A terrible beauty is born" from Yeats' famous poem "Easter 1916," and phrases from songs and novels, such as *The Meeting of the Water* by Thomas Moore and James Joyce's *Ulysses*. He also recited passages from Robert Emmet's hour-long speech, delivered on the eve of his execution for his role in the Irish rebellion of 1803: "When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written." Sometimes when reciting phrases or telling anecdotes of the Easter Rising, he imitated the voices of public figures, such as James Connolly, James Larkins, or Eamon de Valera. These cultural, historical references projected by Collins enable the tourists to encounter the specific moment and people of the history in relation to the rebellion during the tour. The images, the stories and lives of Irish historical figures, at times, converge on a sublime climate of sacrificing their lives for the nation. Guiding thirteen or fewer tourists at one time, Collins's storytelling of the historical memory are thus experienced in a quite intimate and interactive circumstance. The tourist's kinesthetic empathy is coupled by the fact that, as one tourist stated, "you might also laugh and you might also cry" while listening to Collins's storytelling.²⁹

In particular, the tourist's kinesthetic empathy comes from the fact that Collins appeals to the tourists with a concrete and realistic sense of historic anecdotes relating to the Easter Rising. For instance, by explaining Irish republicans' involvement in the Rising, he emphasized the difficulty of divorce or being a vegetarian in the 1910s. This explains why one of tourists claimed that "you could not imagine this from school history. He tells of the human side of the event which makes the history more real."³⁰ Indeed, many tourists on the tour agreed with this sentiment.³¹ In other words, by following the story told by the guide, they were able to undergo an empathic resonance with the circumstances surrounding the 1916 Rising.

Based on their kinesthetic empathy, the tourists also create a performative discourse in their participation during the tour. They produce their own text in each living moment of the tour. Alison Oddey is well aware of this aspect:

In performatively walking the city the spectator creates a narrative. The spectator navigates multiple spatial realities to re-define and re-invent the past and present of the theatrical space of the found performance place of the city, and in so doing, re-contextualises self-identity.³²

During the walking tour, the tourists interact with each other or with the guide through greetings, casual conversation, and the shared appreciation of the Dublin landscape. These interactive activities take place as they move from one place to another during the tour. When they look at the statue of James Larkin inscribed with Larkin's famous speech ("The great only appear great because we are on our knees. Let us rise") written in three

different languages, Irish, French and English, Collins asked the tourists who can speak French. One of the tourists volunteered to read the French version of the quotation from the statue. Admittedly, the tourists simultaneously create their own porous touristic narrative to combine their activities with the story being delivered by the guide. Here, Dublin is not only a source of a performative text for both the guide and the tourists in terms of reviving the emotional memories of the Easter Rising, but also “the mise-en-scene” for staging the historical memory in accordance with connecting the past with the present through the walking tour.³³

Witnessing Origin and Sensory Awareness of Dublin

Landscape

Dublin is filled with statues, monuments, streets, and buildings which are named after the executed leaders or associated with the remembrance of the Easter Rising, including Liberty Hall, the GPO, and O’Connell Street. These sites and monuments function not only as places of national and local importance and reflection, but also as a contemporary landscape of Dublin’s ability to communicate with tourists through time and space.

Once the tour starts, tourists move towards the north side of the city. Here, the act of walking is structured through the guidance of storytelling and the acts of listening and seeing performed by the tourists. As Michel de Certeau points out, “walking affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc., the trajectories it ‘speaks.’”³⁴ In this way, tourists’ walking is a performative medium connecting them to the act of witnessing these symbols of the origins of modern Dublin.³⁵

For the most part, the tourists walk along the roads and on footpaths, amongst the buildings of Dublin’s city center, where the rebels took hold of a number of relevant locations during the Easter Rising. It is significant that the 1916 Rebellion Tour begins and ends walking on Dublin’s streets. Integral to the characteristics of the walking tour itself, this structure foregrounds the interplay of the tourists and the roads. As J’aime Morrison argues, Irish roads are “conduits for movement and memory operating within the larger spatial history of Ireland.”³⁶ Thus, the act of walking serves to inscribe historic events in the context of the 1916 tour.

The tour proceeds with a number of short stops—seven during the tours which I attended. These stops create this tour’s pacing and rhythms, given that “tourism is typically constituted by a blend of placed and mobile rhythms.”³⁷ In the first such stop, the tourists move to an entrance of Trinity College Dublin that is close to the International Bar, which serves as a gathering point. After listening to a synopsis regarding the relationship between Trinity College Dublin’s sectarian education policy and the 1916 Rising, and noting some relevant places that the British army and the rebels occupied, such as Shelbourne Hotel and the Royal College of Surgeons, the tourists move on to the statue of Thomas Moore. They then cross O’Connell Bridge, looking over Liberty Hall, and head to other sites on O’Connell Street, a main thoroughfare in the centre of the city. Notably, there is a pedestrian area in the middle of O’Connell Street, allowing the tourists to see a broad view of the city. While walking toward the city center, the guide points out Liberty Hall and the Custom House, two key buildings attacked and used by the army respectively. They are near the General Post Office that was occupied and used as a barracks by James Connolly and other 1916 leaders.

During the tour, Collins embodies “the silent text of buildings” and revives the historical memory of these sites and buildings in the context of the Easter Rising.³⁸ Dublin’s historic places are thus embodied and reconfigured. For instance, in front of the Bank of Ireland on College Green, the tourists could listen to a discourse on the window tax that was in

operation throughout Britain and Ireland and which affected the appearance of the building, which contains no window glass. On O'Connell Bridge, participants are told about the relationship between Daniel O'Connell and the campaign for Catholic emancipation in the early nineteenth century. These sites underline the tourist's relationship to "conjunctive and disjunctive articulation of places."³⁹ By rearranging and re-acting the city, "imagined geographies" of Dublin are mapped out.⁴⁰ After going inside the GPO, the tourists moved to a site where five members of the Provisional Government were located on Moore Street, and the tour finishes. Of all the places visited in the two hours, these two final spots arguably produce the strongest concrete sense of the Easter Rising. The GPO, where Patrick Pearse read the proclamation of the Republic of Ireland, is an especially evocative place. Here, the tourists can observe bullet holes embedded in the building's columns as the physical scars of historic events. Collins also describes the destruction of Dublin city and the execution of the rebels in accordance with General John Maxwell's controversial dealing with them, foregoing proper legal procedure, and the effect this had on public opinion. If I felt somewhat strange and emotional inside the GPO building while listening to his explanation of what took place here, that would be due to the gap between such a past and the present. Indeed, the GPO serves as one of the most key sites for the 1916 Rising since the ruins of the city were recovered. The very place where the rebels proclaimed independence also serves a major role in Irish people's social welfare, being linked to the Department of Social Protection. This somewhat inexpressible feeling continued in a different way when the tourists reached the last headquarters of the provisional government during the Easter Rising on Moore Street. Beside a fruit market and an adjoining shopping area, this historic building seems isolated and hardly recognizable, as if it were a buried place. The tour ended with Collins's emphasizing the importance of preserving this site.

Typically, the walking tour ends with either a visit to the GPO, Moore Street, or, in some cases, Dublin Castle. Regardless of different destinations, the walking tour brings a sense of empathic cohesion to the tourists in terms of the rebels' urgent need for independence. As Stanton B. Garner Jr. claims, "walking the city becomes a way of redrawing the city's landscape."⁴¹ It is thus important to note that Dublin's monuments and buildings relating to the Easter Rising contribute to shaping the landscape of memory of the rebels, thus forming Dublin's local identity. This is how its landscape is represented for tourists coming to visit Dublin. Therefore, we can say that during the tour, walking through Dublin is understood as an act of witnessing this modern city's origins.

More crucially, the tour provides a form of pleasure to the tourists and this likely stems from the fact that as Dean MacCannell notes, "tourism engages more of the senses than sight."⁴² The 1916 walking tour is based on the Irish Republic's origin. By visiting seminal sites related to this historical memory, apart from the beauty of contemporary Dublin's landscape or its vitality, tourists could be aware of Dublin city in a sensory manner while walking through the city.

Walking is "a sequence of interruptions and encounters."⁴³ All kinds of sensory experiences occur, including noises, the sensation of Dublin's variable weather, and conversation regarding the tourists' awareness of the city—the traffic lights, road markings, streets, trees, etc. A statue of James Larkin stands close to the GPO on O'Connell Street. While Collins tells of the relationship between James Connelly and James Larkin during the 1913 lockout surrounding Bloody Sunday and reads out an excerpt from Larkin's famous speech, inscribed into the front of the statue, the sound of the passing Luas line interrupts and becomes mixed with Collins's recitation. Local acquaintances also interrupt, saying hello to him during the tour.

While looking at a quotation from Sean O'Casey's autobiography *Drums Under the Window* on the other side of the statue of Larkin, the tourists could see locals passing by behind at varying speeds. On the spot marking the centre of Dublin, the tourists could view the entire intersection of the street, which is saturated with noises of vehicles and movement of people. These fragmentary, sensory experiences juxtapose the guide's storytelling with the tourist's individual walking experience, shaping the images of Dublin which the tourist perceives. "Touristic experience takes many forms,"⁴⁴ so that the walking tour reveals embodied moments of sensory forms, which could shape the tourists' impression of significant sites on the tour.

Interestingly, such sensory experience is highlighted by the fact that the tourists' leisurely pace functions as a constant flow of the relaxation which enables them to experience sensory awareness of the city in their own way. Furthermore, stopping places along the walk punctuates the narration, moving the stories forward throughout the tour. These transitional moments become an important part of the rhythm of the tour. Through constructing and transforming Dublin's cityscape, the tourists create and rearrange their perception during the walking tour. This explains how the tour is embodied as a performance genre that commemorates the Easter Rising as historical memory.

From Landscape of Origin to Origin of Landscape

The writer Alain de Botton says in relation to the pleasure of travel that "a dominant impulse on encountering beauty is to wish to hold on to it, to possess it and give it weight in one's life. There is an urge to say, 'I was here, I saw this and it mattered to me.'"⁴⁵ Such pleasure comes from a feeling that "to be a tourist is above all to be a willing stranger."⁴⁶ The pleasure of travel to new and different places is to divorce oneself from reality and to create a distance from one's own reality. This link for a tourist's identity matters in relation to shaping an imaginary landscape:

Identity is often located in a specific physical landscape, and through the changes in that landscape, the memory of times when it was different, changes in the self may be perceived and registered But imaginary landscapes are also important in the construction of identity.⁴⁷

Thus, the pleasure of travel implies (re)creation and (re)arrangement of this imaginary landscape where the tourists rearrange and recreate the perception of their environment. While attending the walking tour, tourists perceived and conceived a landscape of origin by ascribing meaning to Dublin's landscape and the history of the Easter Rising via the guide's storytelling and their act of walking. Here, the tourist's experience of kinesthetic empathy during the tour turns and inscribes this landscape of origin into an origin of landscape.

Acknowledging that "sightseeing is one of the most individualised, intimate, and effective ways we attempt to grasp and make sense of the world and our place in it," the formation of an imaginary landscape is also a way of understanding the nuances of a particular place.⁴⁸ The following review written by one tourist from Quebec City, Canada highlights this point.

This tour far surpasses any historical tour I have ever been on. . . . *My students are French-speaking and yet they were captivated by his every word.* I am amazed that he does this tour on a regular basis because information is delivered in such a fresh way If you go on to travel around Ireland, as we did, you'll soon find out that *this tour will have taught you the history you need to fully appreciate Ireland's past and the struggle of its people.*⁴⁹

This statement gives a resonance to tourists beyond a specific nationality. By writing a review, this tourist formed their own perception of the tour and this is linked to how they remembered Dublin city and Ireland as “a remnant landscape.”⁵⁰ In this regard, the 1916 Rebellion Walking Tour reveals that a key element to shaping a particular local landscape is empathy between the tourists and the guide or between a tourist’s individual interest in Irish local history and their interaction with the tour. However, this sense of empathy could also occur between generations. Collins describes touching moments while running the tour:

The most special moment on the tour in all the years was when I had a group of school children from The Glenties in Donegal who were all about 14 or 15 years of age. We were all gathered at the statue of James Connolly and we bumped into Father Joe Mallin who is the son of one of the executed leaders Michael Mallin. At the time he was 94 years of age and living and teaching in Hong Kong but he was visiting Ireland. I introduced the young children to Fr. Mallin and explained who he was and without any prompting all the children burst into a spontaneous round of applause. It was wonderful to see the bridge between the two generations and it is something that I will never forget.⁵¹

Collins’s sharing this experience indicates how a sort of empathic community is formed during the tour “between the two generations” during the tour. According to Collins, he already has an inscription planned for his grave: “He did a walking tour.”⁵² Although he said this during the tour in a humorous manner, it implies what the 1916 Rebellion Walking Tour means for him. The tour comes from one man’s life-long contribution to Irish history as well as a historical record of Irish tourism. Collins “feel[s] very proud of this historic event” and thus the tour is totally based on his own nationalistic perspective.⁵³ In this respect, the 1916 Rebellion Walking Tour reveals one of the multi-vocal accounts of the Easter Rising in the contemporary context.

Based on these foundations, this tour gives tourists a specific pleasure in their sensory awareness of the Dublin landscape, and an empathy toward local history. Since these pleasures result in the performative form of this tour, they are not confined to any locality, and this 1916 walking tour thus delivers an emotional resonance to tourists experiencing this tour. This is how the 1916 walking tour is perceived and remembered by people. Recognizant of the fact that “When the Rising is re-told it is not necessarily the same event that is remembered each time,” this tour could be placed in the context of commemorating the event on a broader level.⁵⁴

In fact, the staging of the Easter Rising has been “contested” because of the way in which the heroism of the rebels have been dealt with since 1926 when Sean O’Casey’s *The Plough and the Stars* was first staged and Irish audiences protested against the play.⁵⁵ Along with theatre productions of the Easter Rising as well as official commemorative events, the 1916 Rebellion Walking Tour demonstrates how this historical memory, (re)created through walking and storytelling, aestheticizes the city and provokes remembrance by international tourists.

Notes

1. James Moran, *Staging the Easter Rising 1916 as Theatre* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2005), 1. [↗](#)
2. Conor Kostick and Lorcan Collins, *The Easter Rising: A Guide to Dublin in 1916* (Dublin: The O’Brien Press, 2000), 24–37. [↗](#)
3. There are diverse historical tours related to this event such as “The 1916 Easter Rising Coach Tour” and “The 1916 Easter Rising Taxi Tour,” which allow visitors to

explore the main sites of action, such as the GPO and Kilmainham Gaol where the leaders were executed. ↗

4. Susan Bennett, "Performing Ireland: Tourism and the Abbey Theatre," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 30, no. 2 (2004): 31, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/i25515525>. ↗
5. Tim Edensor and Julian Holloway, "Rhythmanalysing the Coach Tour: the Rising of Kerry, Ireland," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* (September, 2008): 489, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-5661.2008.00318.x>. ↗
6. Ben Levitas, *The Theatre of Nation: Irish Drama and Cultural Nationalism 1890–1916* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 224. ↗
7. The travel website tripadvisor.ie displays 379 reviews of the tour, most of which rate it as "excellent" or "very good": In 379 reviews, 372 reviews indicate these favorable responses to the tour. "1916 Rebellion Walking Tour," TripAdvisor, http://www.tripadvisor.ie/Attraction_Review-g186605-d614200-Reviews-1916_Rebellion_Walking_Tour-Dublin_County_Dublin.html, accessed May 11, 2015. ↗
8. Edensor and Holloway, "Rhythmanalysing the Coach Tour," 489. ↗
9. Whelan Feargal, "All Hats and Moustaches: Commemorating and Performing 1916 in 2016," *Estudios Irlandeses* 12, no. 12 (2017): 141–43, <http://www.estudiosirlandeses.org/indexnavy.htm>. ↗
10. Judith Adler, "Travel as Performed Art," *American Journal of Sociology* 94, no.6 (May 1989): 1366–1391, <https://doi.org/10.1086/229158>. ↗
11. Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), 8. ↗
12. Adler, "Travel as Performed Art," 1378. ↗
13. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1988), 98. ↗
14. Tim Edensor, "Performing Tourism, Staging Tourism: (Re)producing Tourist Space and Practice," *Tourism Studies* 1, no. 1 (2001): 62, <https://doi.org/10.1177/146879760100100104>. ↗
15. Collins's comments during the tour. ↗
16. Edensor and Holloway, 486. ↗
17. I attended the tour twice, in fall 2012 and spring 2013, the latter of which I recorded and took notes during the tour. This article is mostly based on my attendance on April 5, 2013 in particular. I cannot deny the fact that the tour could have been slightly different each day, but regardless of my limitations of seeing the tour twice, my experience, for the most part, matches the other tourists' opinion written on the trip advisor website. ↗
18. Emphasis added. ↗
19. Peter Kyhl Olesen, "Dublin: In the footsteps of the rebels," October 2011, 2, accessed July 25, 2018, <http://www.1916rising.com/reviewKyhlOlesen.pdf>. Emphasis added. ↗
20. Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Selected Writings Volume 3, 1935–1938*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Howard Eiland, et al., ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2002), 149. ↗
21. Olesen, "Dublin: In the footsteps," 1. ↗
22. Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 24. ↗

23. Dennis Kennedy, *The Spectator and Spectacle: Audiences in Modernity and Postmodernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 94. [↗](#)
24. Schechner, *Performance Studies*, 29. [↗](#)
25. Benjamin, "The Storyteller," 149. [↗](#)
26. Dee Reynolds, "Introduction," in *Kinesthetic Empathy in Creative and Cultural Practices*, ed. Dee Reynolds and Matthew Reason (London: Intellect Books, 2012), 88. [↗](#)
27. Dean MacCannell, *The Ethics of Sightseeing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011), 184. [↗](#)
28. Interview with Collins by email, April 7, 2013. [↗](#)
29. "Moving and Informative," TripAdvisor, accessed January 21 2019, https://www.tripadvisor.com/Attraction_Review-g186605-d614200-Reviews-1916_Rebellion_Walking_Tour-Dublin_County_Dublin.html. [↗](#)
30. "A Memorable Lesson in History," June 25, 2012, http://www.tripadvisor.ie/ShowUserReviews-g186605-d614200-r132747001-1916_Rebellion_Walking_Tour-Dublin_County_Dublin.html. [↗](#)
31. On the Irish travel website, 385 among 396 people reviewing the tour commented that the vividness of the tour is based on highlighting the rebels' lives in a concrete manner, and that would shape their impression on the tour. TripAdvisor, accessed June 8, 2015, www.tripadvisor.ie. [↗](#)
32. Alison Oddey, *Re-Framing the Theatrical: Interdisciplinary Landscapes for Performance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 137. [↗](#)
33. Oddey, *Re-Framing the Theatrical*, 102. [↗](#)
34. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 99. [↗](#)
35. Edensor, "Staging Tourism," 340. [↗](#)
36. J'aime Morrison, "'Tapping Secrecies of Stone': Irish Roads as Performances of Movement, Measurement, and Memory," in *Crossroads: Performance Studies and Irish Culture*, ed. Sara Brady and Fintan Walsh (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 73–74. [↗](#)
37. Edensor and Holloway, "Rhythmanalysing the Coach Tour," 486. [↗](#)
38. Oddey, *Re-Framing the Theatrical*, 104. [↗](#)
39. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 99. [↗](#)
40. Edensor, "Staging Tourism," 326. [↗](#)
41. Stanton B. Garner Jr, "Urban Landscapes, Theatrical Encounters: Staging the City," in *Land/Scape/Theater*, ed. Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 104–105. [↗](#)
42. MacCannell, *The Ethics of Sightseeing*, 186. [↗](#)
43. Edensor, "Staging Tourism," 340. [↗](#)
44. Kennedy, *The Spectator and Spectacle*, 94. [↗](#)
45. Alain de Botton, *The Art of Travel* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 218. [↗](#)
46. Kennedy, *The Spectator and Spectacle*, 94. [↗](#)
47. Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, "Introduction: Contested Pasts," in *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 11. [↗](#)
48. MacCannell, *The Ethics of Sightseeing*, 6. [↗](#)
49. "Highly informative and entertaining," TripAdvisor, June 18, 2012, <http://www.tripadvisor.ie/ShowUserReviews-g186605-d614200->

[r1322458491916_Rebellion_Walking_Tour-Dublin_County_Dublin.html](#). Emphasis added. ↗

50. Dydia DeLyser, "A Walk through Old Bodie' Presenting a Ghost Town in a Tourism Map," in *Mapping Tourism*, ed. Stephen P. Hanna and Vincent J. Del Casino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 95. ↗
51. Interview with Collins by email, April 7, 2013. ↗
52. Collins's statement during the tour. ↗
53. Collins's statement during the tour. ↗
54. Moran, *Staging the Easter Rising*, 1. ↗
55. Moran, *Staging the Easter Rising*, 14. ↗

[Bio](#)

YJ Hwang

YJ Hwang is researching South Korea's Jeju massacre and its cultural memory for her doctoral project at the University of Pittsburgh. Her research interests include gender, memory, and mobility.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY) License, unless otherwise noted.
ISSN 2469-4053